

# National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

---

## **DANTES Test Centers' Authorization**

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) authorizes military installations with DANTES test centers to administer the NASW Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW) and the Diplomate in Clinical Social Work (DCSW) examinations.

---

## **Background**

In 1960, the ACSW was founded as the first major step towards setting scientific standards for social work practice. The special NASW Committee on the Study of Social Work Competence developed the definitions of competence used by ACSW. Now known as the Competence Certification Commission, this committee developed guidelines for the assessment of social work at the self-regulated practice level.

In 1971, ACSW membership changed to introduce a written objective examination and a formal reference procedure. Admission criteria were further amended to include references from the supervisor and colleagues.

In 1986 The NASW Board of Directors established the NASW Diplomate in Clinical Social Work (DCSW), which first appeared in the 5th edition of the *1987 NASW Register of Clinical Social Workers*. The Committee on Clinical Social Work, under the Competence Certification Commission, determines policies for the Diplomate credential.

---

## **Standard of Service**

The ACSW is a program of NASW to advance the quality of social work and to promote the highest standards of service to the public. Admission is based on

- Educational qualifications
  - Professional experience
  - References, and
  - Successful completion of the written examination
-

## Description

---

**Description**

The ACSW certification exam is an objective test that covers the generic elements of social work including a knowledge, understanding, and application of professional social work principles and values.

---

**ACSW  
Examination  
Facts**

Important facts about the ACSW certification examination are:

No.	Important ACSW Exam Facts
1	A committee of social workers develops the examination. This committee represents different methods and fields of practice, and it decides on the content areas to be covered and the relative emphasis given to each.
2	The questions are written by a selected group of social workers from all parts of the country.
3	Question writers receive detailed instructions for constructing questions.
4	Subject-matter consultants, psychometricians, and editors review and revise all questions to ensure accuracy, relevancy, and conformity with psychometric principles.
5	A panel of NASW advanced-level members reviews the edited questions.
6	Each examination is revised and updated to reflect the latest developments in the field.

---

*Continued on next page*

## Description, Continued

---

### DCSW Examination Facts

Important facts about the DCSW are:

No.	Important DCSW Examination Facts
1	Clinical social work experts develop the DCSW examination.
2	Item writers are used from various parts of the country to develop items on the examination.
3	Various experts, including psychometricians, review the questions to assure they conform to psychometric principles.
4	The examination consists of 12 case scenarios that require short essay responses.
5	Two of the scenarios are presented on audio-tape.
6	Questions represent a range of situations that advanced clinical social workers in a variety of settings might encounter.

---

## Program Materials and Assistance

---

### Program Materials

The applicant or the TCO may obtain registration materials including an information bulletin about the program from:

**National Association of Social Workers**  
**750 1st Street, NE, Suite 700**  
**Washington, DC 20002-4241**

**Toll Free Phone: 1-800-638-8799**  
**Commercial Phone: (202) 408-8600**

**The information bulletin is valuable in preparing for the examination and understanding the certification criteria.**

---

### Questions

Call or write to NASW regarding questions concerning:

- Applicant qualifications
  - Fees
  - Education and/or experience requirements, or
  - Any matter directly related to the ACSW program.
-

# How to Register to take the NASW Examinations

---

## To Register to Take the ACSW Examination

To register for the ACSW examination at an authorized DANTES test center:

Step	Action
1	Send completed application forms (including special services form) to:  <b>Academy of Certified Social Workers National Association of Social Workers, Inc. P.O. Box 630174 Baltimore, MD 21263-0174</b>
2	Send the application fee that must accompany the application form.
3	Send two completed reference forms.
4	Send an official MSW transcript.

---

## To Register to Take the DCSW Examination

To register for the DCSW examination at an authorized DANTES test center:

Step	Action
1	Send completed applications and fees to:  <b>National Association of Social Workers NASW Clinical Credentials P.O. Box 630214 Baltimore, MD 21263-0214</b>
2	Send any questions related to the NASW DCSW examination to:  <b>NASW Clinical Credentials 750 1st Street, NE, Suite 700 Washington, DC 2002-4241</b>  <b>Phone: 800-638-8799 202-408-8600</b>

---

*Continued on next page*

## How to Register to take the NASW Examinations, Continued

**TCOs must include the DANTES ID number in a letter on official stationery indicating their agreement to administer either exam.**

---

**Deadline Dates** Strictly adhere to deadline dates for submission of application forms. Refer to the current DANTES Calendar of National Certification Tests.

---

### Certification Criteria

---

**Certification  
Criteria for  
ACSW**

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria to sit for the ACSW examination:

No.	Eligibility Criteria
1	Be a regular active member in NASW at the time of application.
2	Have a master's degree from a graduate school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
3	On the date of the examination, have 2 years full-time paid post-master's experience under the supervision of a master's level social worker in social work practice service activities with <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals</li><li>• Groups</li><li>• Communities, and</li><li>• Society that includes</li><li>• Supervision, planning, administration, consultation, research, and teaching.</li></ul>
4	Paid part-time experience or a combination of full- and part-time experience is acceptable if it is equivalent to a total of at least 3000 hours.  <b>Under no circumstances will the applicant be eligible if the experience has been accumulated in less than 24 months.</b>
5	May and June graduates who began full-time employment by 1 July are eligible for the June administration held 2 years following their graduation.
6	December and January graduates who began full-time employment by 1 January will be eligible to apply for November test administration 2 years after their graduation.

---

*Continued on next page*

## Certification Criteria, Continued

---

### Certification Criteria For ACSW (Continued)

No.	Eligibility Criteria (Continued)
7	Complete the official application form and submit the required fee.
8	Submit two professional reference rating forms, one from the applicant's immediate supervisor (social worker), and one from another social work professional familiar with the applicant's work. Raters must hold a master's degree in social work.

---

### Certification Criteria for DCSW

Applicants must meet the following criteria to sit for the DCSW examination:

No.	Eligibility Criteria
1	Must be active members of ACSW or licensed at the clinical or advanced level in their state.
2	Have a master's or doctoral degree in social work from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
3	Document 3,000 hours (2 years) of supervised postgraduate clinical experience in an agency or organizational setting under the supervision of a social worker with at least 2 years of post-master's clinical social work experience. Private practice is not accepted for meeting this 2-year requirement.
4	Document an additional 4500 hours (3 years) of clinical social work experience with at least 2 years of practice occurring within the past 10 years. Private practice may be used to fulfill this requirement.
5	Hold the highest level of state licensure or certification available by examination.
6	Successfully complete the NASW DCSW examination.

---

### Eligibility Determination

Upon receipt of the application, reference rating forms, and fee, the applicant's eligibility to sit for the exam will be determined according to the requirements described in the previous section.

---

## Certification Fees

---

### Certification Fees

Fees for examinations administered at DANTES test centers, as indicated below, shall be paid to NASW. The fee must accompany application forms; they are not collected at DANTES test centers.

Examination	Area	Fee*
ACSW	Nonrefundable Application (50% of admin)	
	Test Administration Fee	\$165
	<u>Retake</u>	\$130
DCSW	NASW Member	\$280
	Options (Second Address or cross-reference)	\$35

**\*Make checks or money orders payable to NASW.**

---

## Administration

---

### DANTES Test Center Administration

NASW authorizes DANTES TCOs on military installations to administer the examinations on the following dates:

ACSW - June and November  
DCSW – November

**(See DANTES National Calendar of Certification Tests for exact dates.)**

**The TCO may select a date for administration of the examination on any one date within the published dates.**

---

### Military Administration

**ADMINISTER THE NASW EXAMINATIONS TO ELIGIBLE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY AND RESERVE COMPONENT PERSONNEL ON AN UNFUNDED (EXAMINEE PAYS) BASIS UNLESS EXISTENT MILITARY REGULATIONS PROVIDE OTHERWISE.**

---

*Continued on next page*

## Administration, Continued

---

### Civilian Administration

DANTES test centers may administer the NASW examinations to the following civilians on **AN UNFUNDED (EXAMINEE PAYS) AND SPACE-AVAILABLE BASIS** according to local command policy and Service regulations:

- Retired military personnel
  - Military family members,
  - Veterans, and
  - U.S. federal employees
- 

## Scoring

---

### Scoring

Forward completed examinations to

**ACT, Inc.**  
**Contract Services**  
**Tyler Building**  
**2255 N. Dubuque Road**  
**Iowa City, IA 52243**

---

### Notification of Results

Examinees will be notified of test results and qualification for certification approximately 5-6 weeks after the test administration.

---

## Refunds

---

### Refunds

Candidates who do not meet the minimum certification requirements for the ACSW or who provide written notification of cancellation prior to the test date will be refunded 50 percent of the original test administration fee.

---

### Postponing Test Date

Applicants may postpone until the next test date by providing written notification to ACSW (see address on page III-24-3). A processing fee of 50 percent of the application fee will be retained.

---



## Retesting

---

### Retesting

Applicants failing to pass the ACSW examination may:

- File a new application along with new reference rating forms, and
  - Pay the \$130 test administration fee
- 

## Problems

---

### Problems

Contact ACSW immediately if you experience any problems involving receipt of

- Application forms
  - Descriptive information
  - Examinations
  - Scores, and or
  - Certificates not being received in a timely manner.
-

## Security

---

### Test Loss or Compromise

Refer to Part I of the *DANTES Examination Program Handbook (DEPH)* for complete instructions if there is an NASW test loss or compromise.

Contact DANTES immediately and refer to specific Service regulations for complete procedures. DANTES address is:

<b>DANTES</b>	<b>Phone: (850) 452-1360</b>
<b>Code 20F</b>	<b>DSN: 922-1360</b>
<b>6490 Saufley Field Road</b>	<b>Fax: (850) 452-1161</b>
<b>Pensacola, FL 32509-5243</b>	

---

## Web Pages

---

### DANTES Web Address

Access the DANTES web pages at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>.

---

### NASW Web Address

Access the NASW web page at [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org).

---

### DANTES E-Mail Address

The DANTES Certification Program E-mail address is [certprog@voled.doded.mil](mailto:certprog@voled.doded.mil).

---